

U.S. Soybean Export Council forges collaborative approach to strengthening food security in ASEAN region

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How does U.S. Soy and the USDA prioritize food security through climate adaptation and proactive government policies? Can innovation and free trade contribute to global food security?

U.S. Soy growers are at the forefront of global sustainability standards, emphasizing innovation and ongoing improvement through technology to enhance productivity and resource management.

Precision agriculture, for instance, allows for more efficient and environmentally responsible farming practices, optimizing the use of resources such as water, fertilizers, and pesticides. It not only boosts yields but also reduces the environmental footprint of agriculture, contributing to sustainability and food security.

These efforts underscore the vital role of innovation and free trade in shaping not only global economic growth but also facilitating agricultural innovation critical for global food security. Open trade policies foster knowledge sharing and technology transfer, further enhancing agricultural advancements essential for global food security.

How does USSEC reinforce the importance of international collaboration, sustainability, and innovation in securing the future of global food systems?

USSEC supports the global food system through its multifaceted efforts and initiatives. The organization has longstanding partnerships with Southeast Asia, spanning over four decades. USSEC has continued to help develop the region's agricultural sector by sharing valuable trade and technical knowledge and expertise. USSEC takes a collaborative approach by actively engaging with industry stakeholders as well as engaging in knowledge sharing and networking. USSEC helps to disseminate the latest agricultural trends and practices to stakeholders, thus contributing to the global food system's resilience and sustainability, as demonstrated at events like the Agricultural Cooperators Conference in Da Nang, Vietnam.

The U.S. Soy industry promotes sustainable agriculture and sustainable sourcing of food and feed ingredients through consistent innovation to grow and deliver better solutions. This commitment to sustainability extends to USSEC's collaboration with key players in the region's food and agribusiness sectors.

One such partnership is exemplified by Tempe Azaki's new factory in Bogor, West Java, which uses U.S. soybeans to produce frozen fresh tempeh for global markets, including the U.S., contributing to the international trade of sustainable products. Recognized for its eco-friendly practices, Tempe Azaki is a frontrunner in sustainable tempeh production, aligning with USSEC's aim to promote plant-based, sustainable protein sources.

In summary, USSEC's active involvement in Vietnam and the region's agricultural sector, promoting sustainable agriculture practices, and its efforts to facilitate knowledge sharing among stakeholders aim to support and promote a more resilient and sustainable global food system.

What is the U.S. soy supply outlook for the foreseeable impact on APAC future? What are the key influential aspects of USSEC in Asia?

Southeast Asia is anticipated to remain one of the world's fastest growing regions in terms of consumption, fueled by a young workforce, an expanding middle class, and rising incomes which play a significant role in contributing to the region's economic growth.

These dynamics are driving an increased demand for high-quality protein sources, with U.S. soy products being a prime choice. Moreover, the shift towards plant-based dietary preferences further boosts the demand for soy-based products.

U.S. Soy producers and industry are committed to ensuring a consistent supply of top-quality soybeans to meet the region's growing needs for nutritious, reliable, and sustainable U.S. Soy.

Can you summarize some of the recent trade and collaborative programs initiated or accomplished by USSEC with APAC countries?

USSEC's contribution to the region's soy value chain is multifaceted. In the animal feed sector, we work in partnership with feed mills to showcase the value and advantages of U.S. Soy products, emphasizing not just price considerations but also superior feed quality. This collaboration supports the growth of the animal feed sector and enhances the overall soy value chain.

In the aquaculture sector, we have actively promoted the In-Pond Raceway System (IPRS) since 2013. This initiative has led to increased fish production, reduced environmental impact, and lower operating costs in aquaculture, contributing to the sustainability of the soy value chain. We collaborate with local producers to establish IPRS systems and offer ongoing technical support, thus driving further advancements in the sector.

When it comes to sustainability, U.S. Soy growers are at the forefront of global sustainability standards, emphasizing innovation and ongoing improvement. Through collaboration with Vietnam Airlines, as seen at the 'Service Conference 2023'. During this event, 200 industry leaders were engaged to explore sustainability trends and the potential for eco-conscious practices within the aviation sector.

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Looking ahead, with the support of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, USSEC is planning to expand collaborations with key organizations in the region such as the Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers (VASEP) and The Vietnam Business Council for Sustainable Development (VBCSD). These partnerships help foster sustainable practices and support the growth of the soy value chain in the region.

How are investments and innovations shaping the APAC agri-tech and infrastructure sector?

Investments and innovations play a pivotal role in transforming the APAC agri-tech and infrastructure sector, driving agricultural efficiency, mitigating environmental impact, and bolstering food safety and food security across the region. The emphasis on sustainable and technology-driven agricultural practices is paving the way for future advancements in the agricultural sector.

This is an incredibly diverse region with markets in various stages of agri-tech and infrastructure development. It's important to understand that this diversity presents unique challenges and opportunities for implementing innovative solutions suited to each market.

How does USSEC perceive the industry's potential and limitations in light of strategic partnerships between the public and private sectors?

Forging collaborations and partnerships are important to the work that USSEC does in the region. USSEC in itself is a dynamic partnership between public and private sectors, bringing together U.S. soybean producers, processors, commodity shippers, merchandisers, allied agribusinesses, and agricultural organizations to build preference for U.S. Soy throughout the world.

Partnerships are an important aspect of our investment in innovation. The U.S. Soy industry builds deep partnerships, including support and expert technical assistance in areas like feed milling, poultry, aquaculture and livestock production, oil processing and soy foods. Our partnerships worldwide are essential for innovation and allow us to continue to meet demand.

How is USSEC advancing sustainable sourcing of food and feed ingredients to ensure the lowest carbon footprint?

A significant focus of USSEC's sustainability efforts lies in the U.S. Soy Sustainability Assurance Protocol (SSAP) certification, a globally recognized and accredited sustainability verification program, providing certified shipments for sustainably produced U.S. Soy. Adoption of SSAP in Southeast Asia has risen from 19% in FY19 to 80% in FY23, reflecting USSEC's dedication to sustainability amidst growing concerns about sustainability, climate change, and deforestation.

USSEC's proactive approach extends to collaborations, such as the Memorandum of Understanding between Bangkok Produce Merchandising Public Company Limited (BKP), a subsidiary company of the Charoen Pokphand Foods Public Company Limited (CP Foods) and USSEC to advance sustainable sourcing and supply chain practices for food and animal feed ingredients in Thailand and globally.

Additionally, USSEC is partnering with feed miller and food producers in the region to promote the Sustainable U.S. Soy (SUSS) label. The SUSS logo represents the customer's commitment to sustainability throughout the value chain. Through these initiatives, USSEC plays a vital role in supporting Southeast Asia's agricultural sustainability while enhancing the sustainable production and utilization of U.S. Soy in the region.

In Southeast Asia, how significant is the recent U.S.-Vietnam relationship as key trading partners reaffirming the commitment to sustainable food value chains?

The elevation of the Vietnam-U.S. relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership signifies a strong commitment from both countries to deepen their ties to achieve common objectives of growth, prosperity, and sustainable development. This strategic partnership is poised to bring about considerable positive impact on trade in agricultural products, particularly in the soybean and animal feed sectors.

Trade between the United States and Vietnam reached \$130 billion in the past year, with \$10 billion attributed to agriculture, highlighting significant growth potential. In fact, this growth in trade underscores the opportunity for knowledge exchange, technology transfer, and agricultural innovation, which can help create a robust and sustainable industry. By aligning economic growth with responsible and sustainable practices, Vietnam can position its agricultural sector as a strong and resilient contributor to the country's economy and the global community, thereby attracting foreign investment and contributing to the nation's long-term growth and prosperity.

Looking ahead, with the support of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, USSEC is planning to expand collaborations with key organizations in Vietnam, such as the Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers (VASEP) and The Vietnam Business Council for Sustainable Development (VBCSD). These partnerships help foster sustainable practices and support the growth of the sustainable soy value chain in Vietnam.

How do you foresee APAC market prospects for U.S Soy in aquafeed and animal feed Ingredients?

In light of the post-COVID recovery and the upward trend in consumption, we anticipate a promising outlook for U.S. Soy in aquafeed and animal feed ingredients across the region. As consumption continues to rise, so is the growth in demand for animal protein, and soy-based protein for aquaculture.

U.S. Soy and soybean meal offer superior amino acid digestibility essential for the growth and performance of swine, poultry, fish, and seafood. The U.S. Soy industry remains committed to collaborating with aquaculture and animal producers in the region to meet expanding global nutrition needs.